

THE
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WM. B. FOWLE, EDITOR.

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THE DUTY OF GOVERNMENT

IN REGARD TO GENERAL EDUCATION.

In our last number we obtained a view of what the general government has done, and of what it proposes to do, by a glance at the late message of the new President, and we now propose to take a similar glance at the annual address of the Governor of Massachusetts, repeating our late asseveration that we have no political end in view, and the address of any governor for the last fifty years would have answered our purpose just as well, nay, better, for the last Address of Governor Briggs breathes more of the true spirit that we wish to excite to action, than any Address that has preceded it. Still it falls far behind the requirements of the times, of the present state of civilization, and of the claims of our immediate successors.

First of all, the Governor assures the Legislature that the finances of the State are in excellent order, its credit good and its means ample. The only cloud in the horizon is the deficit of a few thousands arising from the decision of the United States Court, that the State has no right to lay a tax on every poor immigrant who has sacrificed his all, and abandoned his country and his home to avoid starvation. The remedy proposed by the governor, if we understand him, is the laying of a tax in some other form, or the refusal to make the annual grant for the support of state paupers who are mostly immigrants of the description just mentioned. This is a great question of philanthropy as well as finance. As there can be no question that Irishmen are our fellow-men, our neighbors, as near at least as the Samaritans and Jews were to each other, for we have not ceased to have dealings with them,

there seems to be no room to doubt that it is our duty to welcome them, and to allow them a reasonable share of our abundance. We will venture to say that, if our parents and common schools had done their duty; if the pulpit had preached the true kind of charity; if mammon were not the one thing cherished among us; we should thank God, that he had so favored us as to make us his stewards and his almoners in the case under consideration. But let us look at the chief remedy proposed. If the State refuses to pay the towns for the support of such foreign paupers as are cast upon them, the consequence will be, that the towns will refuse to receive them, and they will be thrown upon the charity of benevolent individuals. Our streets, which are now almost free from mendicants, will swarm with them, necessity will lead to increased crimes, and the State will be compelled to support in prisons the wretched beings who will be excluded from alms-houses. Besides, if the influx of such a population is injurious, whose duty is it, if not the State's, to protect such districts as are most exposed to the evil? No one is more sensible than we are to the evils resulting from such immigration, and few, perhaps, have done more in proportion to their ability, to prevent and to remedy them. We are clearly of opinion that such immigrants ought not to be allowed any voice in any matter that touches our institutions, they ought to be compelled, if necessary, to receive instruction as our own children and people do, and the government ought to prevent their becoming paupers or criminals by assisting them in their endeavors to obtain employment. The sum lost by the decision of the court is nothing when distributed over the State, probably not fourpence-half-penny a head. When, a few years ago, the cry of famine reached us from Ireland, how readily did our citizens pour out ten times the sum voluntarily and cheerfully, and why, when the distress is nearer, should relief be grudgingly bestowed or cruelly refused.

There is another view of the subject. The governor, among the just causes of glorification, informs us that we have eleven hundred miles of Railroads with a capital of fifty millions. No one, we think, will pretend that these, and many other great works, could have been accomplished without the aid of these same industrious and hardship-bearing foreigners. The pecuniary evil, therefore, arising from the pauperism of a portion of them must have been fully compensated by the industry of the rest, and certainly, if this infliction of providence has not been entirely agreeable, it has not been one of unmixed evil.

The next subject alluded to in the Message is the State

Prison. The account of this is less particular and less satisfactory than we could wish. We had before learned that serious doubts existed as to the efficiency of the discipline, which was that of kindness without corporal punishment. This system has been tried for several years under the present Warden with remarkable success as the Reports of former years bear witness, and why its sufficiency is called in question now is not apparent, when, as the Governor assures us, the number of inmates is greater than ever before, the workshops and cells being crowded, the number of the sick unusually large, and the proportion of foreigners greater than ever. It is to be regretted that the Warden, who has made the experiment thus far, is about to retire, for such experiments should be carried out by one hand, so that there may be no mistake in regard to the result. Under the previous system, the Warden lost his life in revenge for punishment inflicted; but, under the more lenient system, we have never heard of any violence done to any officer. The concluding sentence of the paragraph relating to the Prison breathes the right spirit, and we only regret that it was not followed up by some plan commensurate with the humane suggestion. "Humanity," says the Governor, "utters her imploring voice, and calls on you to devise every means in your power to PREVENT your erring fellow-beings from rushing into crimes." Here the truly respectable and benevolent magistrate has hit upon the great defect in our criminal code, and in our legislation, and if he had only followed up the hint with some plan, or some suggestions, for the consideration of the people and their representatives, he would have done some good. It is true that PREVENTION is the great "one thing needful," and, until the undivided attention of our legislators and philanthropists is turned to this, no great improvement can be expected. While deploring the increase of crimes, indicated by the crowded prison, the governor incidentally says, "It is gratifying to learn that the proportion of second comers was somewhat less than in previous years." What a fine opportunity was here presented for the recommendation of some plan for the employment and assistance of discharged prisoners; what a chance for complimenting that excellent society for the aid of discharged convicts, to whose labors, probably, the decrease of second comers is to be attributed; but we have not a word of suggestion or of compliment. Then the State Reform School, or, as we trust it will be called, the LYMAN REFUGE, is duly noticed, and its great object and influence commended; but not a word is said about the duty and necessity of carrying out the plan, so that its benefits may be coextensive with the State. We are told that the School has

done all that could be expected, that it is filled and no more can be received, but the Governor gives no opinion of his own as to the duty of the State to imitate this work of an individual, and provide more schools, though he praises Mr. Lyman, and hints very strongly that other rich citizens had better "Go, and do likewise." Not a word is said of this school as one branch of the *Preventive System*: not a word is said of establishing a similar school for *Females*, thousands of whom, as of the other sex, are to be allowed to go on to maturity in crime, in the expectation that some other Lyman will arise, one of these days, and do something to save them. In our opinion, the Governor, the Legislature and the People will hereafter be held answerable at the bar of the Great Judge, for every one of these little ones that perishes through this delay, and this neglect.

[To be continued.]

ENGLISH GRAMMAR. NO. III.—DR. WEBSTER.

The first English Grammar published by Noah Webster, was printed at Hartford, in 1784, and bears the following title, "A Grammatical Institute of the English Language, comprising an easy, concise, and systematic method of education, designed for the use of English schools in America, in three parts. Part I. Containing, A plain and comprehensive Grammar, grounded on the true principles and idioms of the language, with an analytical dissertation in which the various uses of the auxiliary signs are unfolded and explained: and an Essay towards investigating the Rules of English Verse. By Noah Webster, Jun. Esq. *Usus est norma loquendi.*—Cicero. Hartford, Printed by Hudson & Goodwin, for the Author, M,DCC,LXXXIV. Under protection of the Statute."

This grammar proposed to do a great work for American children, not unlike that which we now have proposed; for, the author in the first paragraph of his preface, says, "The design of this part of the Institute is to frame a grammar of our own language upon its true principles, and calculate it for the benefit of common English Schools. No grammar that has hitherto appeared seems well adapted to answer this particular purpose. Mr. Dilworth's,* which has had the most general circulation in America, is not constructed upon the principles of the English language; it is, to use the words of an eminent scholar and critic (?), 'A mere Latin grammar, very

* There is a short compend of English Grammar, in Dilworth's Spelling Book, but we have never seen any other English Grammar with Dilworth's name attached to it. The Spelling Book was common in our schools, till superseded by Perry's and Webster's.

indifferently translated.' As to those articles in which all languages agree, such as the general definition of nouns, adjectives, &c., he is usually right; but wherever our language is built upon principles peculiar to itself, he is invariably wrong. We are apt to be surprised that men who made the languages their principal study, and, during their whole lives, were employed in teaching youth, should not discover that the grammar of one language would (will) not answer for another; but our wonder will cease when we reflect, that the English nation, at large, have, till very lately, entertained the idea that our language was (is) incapable of being reduced to a system of rules; and that, even now, many men of much classical learning, warmly contend that the only way of acquiring a grammatical knowledge of the *English* tongue is first to learn a *Latin* grammar. That such a stupid opinion should ever have prevailed in the English nation; that it should still have advocates; nay, that it should still be carried into practice, can be resolved into (by) no cause but the amazing influence of habit upon the human mind."

In this grammar, Webster proposed nine parts of speech, the article being one, and the participle being excluded. He gave to nouns only two genders, but used the term neuter as others do. He said *case* means a different ending of a word to express a different relation, and so he allows but two cases. As our author calls the word *a* an indefinite article, we see not why the above definition may not mean that, "case is a different ending of *any* word, and, of course adjectives, having three endings, have three cases, and verbs have as many cases as tenses! Webster allows no *passive* verb or voice, and his reason is, "Every word should be considered as a distinct part of speech, for though two or more words may be united to form a mode, a tense, or a comparison, yet it seems quite improper to unite two or more words to make a noun, a verb, or an adjective." It is amusing to see the same author thus assuming credit for rejecting the passive form, *I am loved*, because "the participle is no part of the verb *Be*, but a participle or adjective of the verb *love*," and at the same time assuming credit for adding five tenses to the Indicative mode, all formed by adding the present participle to the verb *Be*, as in the other case, viz., I am loving, I was loving, I have been loving, I had been loving, I shall or will be loving. He has a second future also, like Murray's, but he allows no second future definite, though *I shall have been loving* seems to be as good English as *I shall have loved*; and the difference of meaning, if there is any, we do not perceive. In the Indicative mode, then, Webster, allowed *eleven* tenses. The tenses of the Potential mode he divided into present, imperfect, per-

fect and future, and into absolute and conditional, but he also introduces the *definite* form of each, I may be learning, I might be learning, I may have been learning, I might have been learning. The future is, I may learn to-morrow, I should learn, if I had a book, &c. In regard to the Subjunctive mode, Webster claimed the merit of having first noticed that, after *if, though, whether, unless, lest, except*, whenever we speak of a thing certain, we use the indicative, and when of a doubtful thing, the subjunctive; as, If I *be* false, slay me; if I *am* false, you made me so. To the subjunctive mode the author not only allows all the tenses of Murray, and all the corresponding *definite* tenses, as he calls those formed by *Be* and the present participle, and which some of his successors call the *Progressive Mode*, but he has another class of tenses, which we shall describe in his own words. "The same distinction of *doubtful* and *hypothetical* runs through all the several modes of expressing power, liberty, obligation, &c; the auxiliaries *may, can, must*, form the *doubtful* tenses, and *might, would, could, should*, the *hypothetical*. These may be called, by way of distinction, the auxiliary tenses of the subjunctive mode." This shows into what excesses the imagination may run, if *phrases* be used for *tenses*, and *shades* of meaning, are substituted for *modes* of speaking.

How far any credit is due to Dr. Webster for this, his earliest effort, may be learned from his own pen. In the preface to his great Dictionary, published in 1828, he says, in reference to a letter from Lindley Murray, dated in 1803, "Twenty years before the date of this letter, I had prepared and published a grammar, on the model of Lowth's, with some variations, and on the same principles as Murray has constructed his. This work passed through many editions before Murray's book appeared in this country. But, before this period, my researches into the structure of language had convinced me that *some of Lowth's principles are erroneous, and that my own grammar wanted material corrections*. In consequence of this conviction, believing it to be immoral to publish what appeared to be false rules and principles, I determined to suppress my grammar, and actually did so, and determined on the publication of a new work, which was executed in 1807." After complaining of Mr. Murray for making an unacknowledged use of his grammar, Dr. Webster says, "Being perfectly satisfied that some principles of Lowth's Grammar, which constitutes the body of Murray's, are entirely erroneous, I have prefixed a brief grammar to this Dictionary, which is committed to my fellow citizens as the mature result of all my investigations. It is the last effort I shall make to arrest the progress of error on this subject. It

needs the club of Hercules, wielded by the arm of a giant, to destroy the Hydra of educational prejudice. The club and the arm, I pretend not to possess, and my efforts may be fruitless; but it will ever be a satisfaction to reflect that I have discharged a duty demanded by a deep sense of the importance of *truth*. It is not possible for me to think with indifference, that half a million of youth in our schools are daily toiling to learn *that which is not true*. It has been justly observed that ignorance is preferable to error."

In a future number we shall probably examine some of the reasonings of Dr. Webster, but we shall now only notice one of the errors of fact and reasoning into which he unconsciously fell. "If it should be said," says he, "that our verbs have not tenses, because they have not variations of termination to express them, I would reply, that this may be considered a mistake proceeding from an early bias, impressed upon us by the Greek and Latin forms of the tenses. A *tense* is a term intended to denote a form of verbs used for expressing time, or some division of it, and it is just as properly applied to a *combination of words* for that purpose, as to a modification of the simple verb. The use of it is entirely arbitrary. It is the *time*, and not the form of words used to express it, which stamps propriety on the denomination." Now it appears to us, that the *mistake* lies in assuming that the *phrases* corresponding to Latin and Greek *words* are English *tenses*; for, if they are so, then every English phrase corresponding to every tense of every language under heaven is a good English tense also. The word *tense* has erroneously been supposed to come to us from *tempus*, the Latin word for *time*; but a more natural derivation is from *tensus*, *extended*; because, in Greek and Latin, the tenses are formed by an *extension* of the root, by an addition to it, as, *am-o*, *am-abam*, *am-avi*, *am-averam*, *am-abo*, &c., &c. As to a tense's expressing time, we should want no better authority than Dr. Webster's own words to refute the error. The common names and distribution of the tenses," says he, "are utterly incorrect, and incompetent to give a just idea of their uses." Then, to show that the present *tense* does not imply present *time*, he gives the following among other examples.

As soon as it *is* light. (shall be)
 When the coach *arrives*. (shall arrive)
 Milton *resembles* Homer. (Figurative)
 He *works* for a living. (continually)
 He *founds* Rome and *dies*. (founded, died)
 He *is going* in a few months. (will go)

The fact, probably, is, that no verb ever expresses the time in which its action is performed, but this is gathered from the

context, or from the circumstances. But, we have better authority than Dr. Webster on this subject. Dr. Wallis, in speaking of the grammarians, says, "All of them, by forcing our English rules to conform to the Latin, have inculcated many useless rules about the conjugations, modes and tenses of verbs, which are entirely foreign to our language, and, therefore, rather increase its confusion and obscurity, than aid in its illustration." Dr. Crombie says, "In exhibiting a paradigm of the conjugation of our verbs, many grammarians have implicitly and servilely copied the Latin grammar, transferring into our language the names both of tenses and modes, which have formally no existence in English. It appears to me that nothing but prejudice or affectation could have prompted our English grammarians, to desert the simple structure of their own language, and wantonly to perplex it with technical terms for things not existing in the language itself."

The third and last effort of Dr. Webster contains some valuable remarks on the use of the auxiliaries, pronouns, syntax, &c., but like the earliest effort, it is only "A Latin grammar, very indifferently translated," the paradigm of the verb being more complex than any other, with the exception, perhaps, of one lately published, which seems to be essentially borrowed from it. It is to be regretted that, when Dr. Webster had so fair a chance, to restore the true English grammar to the half million, now two millions of youth in our schools, and to establish rules that would have corrected many errors, and have laid a foundation for the sure and gradual reduction of many anomalies to analogy and order, he should not only have run off the English track, but have deviated farther from it than any of his predecessors.

WALLIS.

TIME OR TENSE.—When St. Augustine was asked, "*Quid Sit Tempus*, What is Tense?" he answered, "*Si nemo quærat a me, scio; si quis interroget, nescio;*" which may be thus Englished,—

If no one asks me what are *tenses*,
I know right well;
If asked, I straightway lose my senses,
And can not tell.

Our grammarians seem to be all St. Augustines.

An invalid, describing his weakness to a friend, remarked, that he could no longer walk round the Park, and was only able to walk half way round and back again.

MASSACHUSETTS.

BY J. G. WHITTIER.

The South Land has its fields of cane ;
The prairie boasts its heavy grain ;
And sunset's radiant gates unfold
On rising marts and sands of gold.

Rough, bleak and cold, our little State
Is hard of soil, of limits strait ;
Her yellow sands are sands alone ;
Her only mines are ice and stone.

From Autumn frost to April rain,
Too long her winter woods complain ;
From budding flower to falling leaf,
Her Summer time is all too brief.

But on her rocks and on her sands,
And stormy hills, the Schoolhouse stands,
And what her rugged soil denies,
The harvest of the Mind supplies.

The treasures of our Commonwealth
Are free, strong minds, and hearts of health ;
And more to her than gold or grain,
The cunning hand and cultured brain.

For, well she keeps her ancient stock,—
The stubborn strength of Pilgrim Rock ;
And still maintains, with milder laws
And clearer light, the Good Old Cause !

Nor dreads the skeptics puny hands,
While near her School the Church-spire stands ;
Nor fears the blinded bigot's rule,
While near the Church-spire stands the School.

THE FORCED LIE.

[Written for the Common School Journal.]

"What boy, my son, was that with whom I saw you playing this morning? You know I have often cautioned you about the choice of your playmates; every thing depends upon a proper choice." The lad thus addressed, supposing that he should incur his father's displeasure, and be severely punished if he named the real boy, who, though not what would be called a bad boy, was not the best that could be found, replied, that he was playing with Gamaliel Trueman. "No," said the father, with some asperity of manner, "It was John Hopeless. What do you mean by telling me a falsehood?" The son, who feared punishment more than he loved a lie, and who had given the wrong name, because he

thought it a matter of no importance, since he had done no mischief, now found himself in an unpleasant dilemma; but, preferring to persist in the falsehood rather than confess it, he said, with a hesitancy of manner that almost amounted to confession, "No, father, it was Gamaliel." "Go to bed! sir," said the angry father, "you shall have no supper to-night, and no more food till you confess the truth." The boy was sorry enough that he had made such a mistake, but he felt indignant at the harsh treatment he had received, and without any confession, and without even asking for a light, he retired to his chamber.

Before he could close his eyes, he heard a light footstep on the stairs, and presently a gentle voice, which he immediately knew to be his sister's, said to him, "William, here is some supper for you, but don't tell who gave it to you." "I shall not eat it, Mary, for father forbade my eating any thing," said William. "I told a lie, and ought to suffer for it, but I shall not be disobedient also, and, perhaps, lead you into trouble." "Dear brother," said the affectionate girl, "why did you persist in telling the falsehood as you did?" "Because I was angry," said William, "at being accused of lying, when I meant no harm, and really did none." "Every lie does harm to the teller, if to no one else," said the gentle girl; "but, William, if you love me, I wish you would do one thing." "What is it?" said the softened boy. "Do you promise?" said his sister, "come, I know you will." "Well, I promise," said William, "but I hope it is not to be disobedient, or to tell another lie." "No," said Mary, "it is only to ask father's forgiveness to-morrow morning, and not to tell him that I asked you to do so." William promised, and faithfully kept his word. He was heartily forgiven, and some days afterward, at a meeting of parents for mutual improvement in the government of children, his father related this story to illustrate the good effects of prompt and severe punishment of such offences. Mistaken man! he did not know that the tears of Mary, and the tenderness of her expostulations had melted the heart, which, but for her mediation, would soon have hardened into flint.

A. P. H.

THE FIRST STEP.

The first step which children take in education is generally the most important, and the least attended to. This step is taken at home, where one would think no pains would be spared to begin aright; and yet no one will deny, that not one parent in a hundred has the least idea that education commences before the child is sent to school. We care not

how theologians settle the question of innate and original depravity, since they all agree in allowing that it is of importance what influences are placed around the young, what examples, what temptations, what excitements. Each of these points is deserving of a more extended consideration, and it shall have one in due time, but our object now is merely to call the attention of parents to a quiet influence, which they may exert upon the senses of their children. In training the eye, much may be done by pictures, whether in books or suspended in the room. If these are well selected, well drawn, and illustrative of some good moral, the child will insensibly make them the standard by which others will be judged. Care should be taken, if they are colored, to have them well colored; for, children, like savages, love what is gaudy, and should early be trained to a better taste. The ear may be trained to great delicacy in the judgment of sounds, by a little care in the selection of such songs or tunes as the mother or nurse may sing, and especially by the language which the child habitually hears. It will avail little for the child to hear correct pronunciation occasionally, if its intercourse is chiefly with ignorant and perhaps foreign domestics. The language and pronunciation of Southern children is often seriously corrupted by their intercourse with slaves, but we fear that Northern children do not suffer less by the almost universal employment of Irish domestics. What wonders could be effected with the touch, if children, from the first, were trained to use it, may be seen by the superior touch of the educated blind. The taste should undoubtedly be trained from the first to love what is plain and simple. No child should be allowed to eat any hot, high seasoned, or in any way perverted food, for such stimulants are not needed, and must be increased from time to time, until the food is no longer wholesome. Take care then of the first step, and it will be easier to take the second, and the child will be saved from the pain of retracing its steps in after life.

PUNCTUATION. NO. IV.

In our last, we gave a sentence to test the skill of the learner, and we selected it, because it may illustrate the use of the colon, as well as show how the colon may be dispensed with. With the colon the punctuation may be this;

"In virtue, they were alike; in oratory there was some difference: one was more concise; the other more diffuse: one more constrained; the other more free: the one, keen; the other, weighty: from one, nothing could be spared; to the other, nothing could be added: in the one, more of care; in the other, more of nature."

On our plan, which dispenses with the colon, and is in general use, the punctuation will be as follows.

"In virtue they were alike, in oratory there was some difference; one was more concise, the other more diffuse; one more constrained, the other more free; the one, keen,—the other, weighty; from one nothing could be spared, to the other nothing could be added; in the one (was) more of care,—in the other, more of nature."

We have inserted *was* in the last clause, because, we think, the author improperly omitted it. If we understand the system of Dr. Mandeville, he would punctuate the sentence thus.

"In virtue, they were alike: in oratory, there was some difference: one was more concise: the other more diffuse: one more constrained: the other more free: the one, keen: the other, weighty: from one, nothing could be spared: to the other, nothing could be added: in the one (was) more of care: in the other, more of nature."

If we have failed to apply the Dr.'s rules correctly, after careful study of them, we should think a child would hardly be expected to succeed. But, let us resume our lesson. The next pause is the *period*, which word means *circuit*, a period being complete in itself as a circle, and having no dependence in sense or grammatical construction on the words that precede or follow it. Beginners rarely make too many periods, their fault is rather the including of two or more complete sentences in one period. It is important to distinguish the *period* from the *dot*, which marks an abbreviation, and from the *point*, which separates units or whole numbers from decimals in arithmetic. The teacher should be careful to use these names correctly, and never to allow the pupil to put a comma for the decimal point, because, when the figures on the left of the decimal point exceed three, many separate them by commas, thus, 3,475,278.015, but, if a comma be used also for the decimal point, confusion must ensue.

It is often said, that the period may always be substituted for the colon, and usually for the semicolon; but this is too general a remark, although, by altering a word or two, it may often be done. Thus, the sentence, that we have just given, may be broken into six, without injury to the sense, and it will then read thus.

"In virtue they were alike; in oratory there was some difference. One was more concise; the other more diffuse. One (was) more constrained; the other more free. The one (was) keen; the other weighty. From one, nothing could be spared; to the other, nothing could be added. In the one (was) more of care, in the other more of nature."

A good exercise, now, is, to take any book, and, writing on the blackboard two or more sentences, without any pauses, require the pupils to cut them into sentences and smaller divisions. The best specimens of involved sentences, badly

separated into periods, may be found in the compositions of beginners, and these should be selected by the teacher, and commented on before the class.

Although it may appear from these remarks that great difference of opinion exists on the subject of punctuation, still we think, in practice, there is very little difference, and a comparison of works from the best presses will soon satisfy the teacher that the general laws are well established. But, perhaps, no mark of punctuation has been so much misused as the *dash*. Ignorance of the art of punctuation has led many writers to use the dash instead of the four pauses that have been noticed, and, at last, many have come to the erroneous conclusion that the dash is a substitute for each and all of them. We have seen many manuscripts prepared for the press, that had hardly any other mark, it being left to the printer to guess what pause the dash represented. This is a wretched plan, and carries us back to the time when the only mark used was a vertical one, thus (|,) or a dot, which we see between every word in some ancient inscriptions. The fact is, the dash, when properly used, never stands *instead* of any of the pauses. When alone, its proper use is to show that the sense is suspended and the sentence broken, as in the expression, "Wretch! I will tear—— but no, he is insane." So in the dialogue,

"A. I will only say that——"

B. (*Laying his hand on A's mouth*) Hush! You have said too much already."

When used with another pause, the dash lengthens it, and this additional length is often indicated by the length of the dash. Thus,

"One word alone remains, and that,——farewell!"

The safest plan is not to allow children to use the dash at all, until they are expert in punctuation. Some teachers write sentences and place dashes instead of pauses, requiring the pupils to say what each dash represents; but we think a better plan is, to write the sentence without dashes or pauses, and let the pupils insert the proper pauses, giving a reason as they insert them.

[To be continued.]

NORMAL SCHOOLS.

[Extracted from the Boston Mercantile Journal.]

The Normal School has done much, as I have freely and fully admitted, to advance the cause of common education. I have also mentioned some of the particulars in which it is

obvious an advance has been made. But the Normal School has not, as yet, done its perfect work. Strange, indeed, had it been so. The few years which have elapsed since its introduction, could not have done more. It has been in its infancy and childhood. These, of course, are indispensable preliminaries to manhood; but they are not manhood itself.

Let us consider for a few moments what may be expected of the Normal School in its more advanced and matured condition.

In my last communication, I said that one principal object of the Normal School is "to teach the art of teaching." Perhaps I should have said rather, "to teach the art of *educating*." The day has gone by, I trust, when the term "to teach" was synonymous with "to educate."

That it has not been a prominent object of the Normal School to teach the science of teaching or educating, I have already stated to be my most sincere belief. Am I not correct? Has it not been a principal aim to carry the candidate forward, and render him perfect master of the sciences he may have to teach?*

Now in a more advanced state of the Normal School, it will be a first and higher aim to teach the "candidate" how to meet the existing wants,—physical, social, intellectual and moral,—of his pupils. He will not be required to pursue a course which will only serve to inflate him. He will not come forth from the Institution in all the pride and vanity of caste, or in the belief that there is any thing of magic in the word or offices of "Normalty," which can make him a good teacher, if he have not as yet studied the first elements of the art of teaching and educating.

Some of the earliest fruits of Normalty have not, as is well known, given public satisfaction. I will not say that there have been among them any of the apples of Sodom, for this is not my meaning; but they have come to the school inflated with the idea of superiority, without being able to substantiate their claims.

It were well,—I will not say that it is indispensable, but it is certainly desirable,—that every individual who attends a Normal School, should have already acquired, by several years' experience as a teacher, a tolerable reputation. Then, and not till then, would they be likely to grow with a natural growth while there, and to bring forth the fruits of wisdom in subsequent life.

The "Normalite" should not only be able to speak the language of the School, but he should show himself a superior

* The writer might have said, "which he may *not* have to teach."

workman. In time to come he will do so. It is not sufficient that he receive increased wages for his services, but he must earn them. It is not sufficient that, when examined by his Committee, he talk flippantly about the defects of the old system of education; he must be able to teach in a manner which shall show his better faith by his better works.

I have examined these teachers and visited their schools. They have almost uniformly disappointed my expectations. It is not that they always failed entirely, but I had been led to expect, from their appearance and promises at the examination, that they would do better than other teachers. Perhaps I ought not, in the incipient state of "Normalty," to have had any such expectation. Perhaps I ought to have looked for promise without performance,—for the superficial still, rather than for the thorough or the solid.

Teachers, who are teachers indeed, before they enter the Normal School, and who come there hungering and thirsting after improvement, and who have manifested, through their whole course, that they belong to the army of "progression,"—the hundred and forty-four thousand,—will not be likely to disappoint us. They will be more likely to teach better than their predecessors, than to promise better.

They will be *more thorough*. Much is said in these days of being thorough. One principal of a Normal School was ever found with the word thorough on his lips, but his pupils were far enough, many of them, from being more thorough in their schools, than those who were prepared for their profession by other instrumentalities.

They could, it is true, introduce to their schools certain novelties, that were called improvements. But were they such? They could give the elementary sounds of the English language, from day to day, and leave the impression on the minds of the wondering auditor that something great was done; but a person of plain, unsophisticated common-sense, was very apt to make an inquiry sometimes made in old Rome, "*Cui bono?*"—words which, without being a Latin scholar, I will venture to translate—"What's the use?"

Let us stop a moment just where we are. I have seen most of our Normal Schools, and many teachers which emanated therefrom. Yet I have never seen any practical use made of these elementary sheets, and charts, and tables, in but a single Normal School. Is my experience and observation of a piece with that of other friends of education and of the Normal School?

In the manhood and womanhood of "Normalty," it will not be deemed enough by teachers that they increase the number of sciences in the school, while they suffer the pupils

to be shallow and superficial in about the same proportion. They will prefer thoroughness to display, and a little real progress to a great deal which is only apparent. They will not attempt to satisfy their patrons, with an *examination* at the end of a term, but themselves,—that is, their own consciences,—with a *daily* examination, at which the school is present, and as many visitors as choose to come in. For, in the days of Normal manhood, the doors of the school-room will be open every day to visitors, and not once a quarter, and that at the most unimportant part of the term.


Understand me, however. I do not say that the Normal School has failed. I might as well say the Sabbath School has failed, or the Temperance cause. At most, it only retains, a little too long, its incipient, initiatory character. I would merely say, in the way of criticism, what an Apostle said to the readers of his epistles,—“Wherefore be no more children, but be ye men;” or, to apply it to the friends, attendants, and graduates of Normal Schools, BE YE MEN AND WOMEN.

West Newton, Jan. 12, 1850.

W. A. A.

REFERENCE DICTIONARIES.—We believe nothing is more needed in our district schools than a good standard English Dictionary, and we are glad to hear that there is a proposal before the Legislature to give one to every common school. As there can be but one opinion among those acquainted with the subject, and disinterested, we trust the preference will be given to Worcester's late large work, which is incomparably more useful than Webster's or any other for our schools. The general use of Worcester, in Massachusetts, has raised and kept up the standard of Orthography and Pronunciation in our schools, and the Legislature will, no doubt, see that the Republic of Letters receives no damage like that which would follow the introduction of the eccentric and unsafe standard set up by Noah Webster.

Notwithstanding the pains taken by some instructors to “Teach the young idea how to *shoot*,” some persons think the young ones do not so often become *sports-men* as victims.

 All Communications, Newspapers, and Periodicals, for the Journal, should be addressed to Wm. B. Fowle, Editor, West Newton.

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